This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 000842

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN; DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PHUM PGOV AM
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST LEAVES HOSPITAL; ALLEGES
GOVERNMENT ROLE IN BEATING

REF: YEREVAN 765

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect
accordingly.

SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) Prominent human rights activist Mikhail
Danielyan discharged himself from the hospital April 4,
and remains at home recovering from the March 30
beating by unknown assailants. Danielyan offered no
new information regarding the attack, but told us he
strongly feels that it was "government-ordered." He
hypothesizes that he was a "test-case" for the
authorities to determine international response to
their heavy-handed tactics against the opposition.
President Kocharian has charged Procurator-General
Aghvan Hovsepian with personally overseeing the
investigation into the attack. End Summary.

IMPROVED CONDITION

¶3. (SBU) We visited human rights activist Mikhail
Danielyan at his home April 7. Danielyan told us that
he had discharged himself from the hospital April 4,
choosing to convalesce at home rather than "suffer
further" in the hospital. He was lucid, and the
injuries sustained to his face had largely healed.
Danielyan said that doctors told him he did not have a
concussion as initially thought, but he told us he
still had "terrible headaches" and had trouble sleeping
and concentrating.

CRITICISM OF INVESTIGATION'S PACE

¶4. (SBU) The day after the attack, President Kocharian
publicly announced that Procurator-General (PG) Aghvan
Hovsepian would personally head the investigation of
the Danielyan beating. An official in the PG's office
told us April 8 that a full investigation had been
launched, with local police interviewing witnesses.
Danielyan told us that he had spoken with authorities
only once since his initial statement to the police.
Danielyan claims that his recent meeting with an
official from the PG's office was merely a formality.
He complained that he had not been examined by a
medical official from the PG's office, as required by
Armenian law (Note: The official in the PG's office
told us that Danielyan had received written
notification from the Forensic Department of the PG's
office requesting the examination, but Danielyan had
not responded. End Note.)

"TEST-CASE" FOR AUTHORITIES?

¶5. (SBU) Danielyan maintained that he could not
identify his assailants, but they were of the "gray,
thuggish" variety. Despite any direct evidence,
Danielyan is sure that the authorities organized the
attack. He believes that the authorities were seeking
to incapacitate him during the planned opposition
campaign to unseat the government. Danielyan alleges
that his beating was a "test-case" to see if Western
embassies would protest the government's heavy-handed
tactics. According to Danielyan, failure to do so
emboldened the police and other security forces to take
similar action against opposition supporters.

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COMMENT: LACK OF EVIDENCE LEAVES ROOM FOR SPECULATION
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¶6. (SBU) Danielyan is now convinced that his beating

was in fact not directly related to the Echo newspaper article in which he made comments that could be considered pro-Azerbaijani (see reftel). Certainly not one to ever shy away from broader conspiracy theories, Danielyan now maintains that the article provided a pretext for the assault that leaves him bedridden for the start of the opposition's campaign to unseat President Kocharian. We tend to doubt this explanation; however, there is little evidence for any theory. What is certain, however, is that Danielyan will be forced to take a much less active role in personally monitoring the demonstrations than he did last year, when he assisted numerous people detained during the opposition protests of the election results. He will need to rely on his staff at the Helsinki Association to follow through in his absence.
ORDWAY